

round and regardless of which party is in power. Specifically, I would like to pay tribute to Steve and Sharon Rusnak, a truly unique couple who will both be retired within the next few months after serving "behind the scenes" in the House of Representatives for a truly remarkable combined service of 70 years.

Most of our colleagues, along with countless numbers of our constituents, have been on the other side of Steve's camera lens and have benefited from the skill, talent, and quiet dignity that he has brought to his work in the Office of Photography for the past 32 years. Steve joined the staff of the House in January of 1977 and has been witness to and chronicled the tremendous changes that have occurred within the Congress and the Nation for more than three decades.

After attending Ohio State University, Steve began his career as a lab technician and just retired from the House as senior photographer, having also served as acting manager for the Office of Photography last year. Through his skill, hard work, and long hours Steve has made an important contribution to the archives of the House, providing a visual recorded history and account of the House's work for these many years.

In addition to being on hand to photograph the annual State of the Union Address and other official events inside and outside of the House chamber, Steve has traveled the four corners of the world to record on film the work of Members of the House. And for so many years he has rushed from office to office and to the steps of the House chamber, in all kinds of weather, to photograph the visits made by our constituents and other groups to Washington.

In addition to the professionalism and ability he brings to his job as an official House photographer, his kind manner and ready smile have put many people at ease and given them a visual reminder of their visit to Capitol Hill which for many is a once in a lifetime opportunity. There is no telling how many people Steve has photographed and touched in such a unique way. Steve worked long hours and missed many lunches to do his job and to do it so well, and he was supported throughout the process by a woman who is no stranger to the long hours and unique workplace that exists here in the "people's House."

Sharon Rusnak began her service in the House in 1967, as a summer intern to the late Congressman Carl D. Perkins, D-KY. After graduating from Berea College, she worked in his official office and went on to serve as executive assistant for him, and after his death, for his son Carl C. Perkins until 1993. In addition to maintaining a very full Hill schedule, Sharon earned a master's degree in education from George Washington University.

After serving as office manager to former Representative Lynn Schenk, D-CA, Sharon joined the staff of former Congressman E "Kika" de la Garza, D-TX, and served as scheduler for the House Committee on Agriculture until Kika's retirement in 1996. For the next 8 years, she served as office manager for the committee's ranking minority member, former Congressman Charlie Stenholm, D-TX. Sharon is currently serving as chief administrative officer for the Agriculture Committee chaired by Congressman Collin C. Peterson, D-MN, and will remain in that position for the next few months.

Despite the long hours and hectic schedules, Steve and Sharon Rusnak have enjoyed

a happy and productive life away from the halls of Congress. They married in 1973 and raised two daughters, Shelley Brooke and Stacey LeeAnn, and took an active hand in helping nurture their children's educational and athletic abilities. Steve served as a youth basketball coach, youth soccer coach, and little league coach. A soccer player in her own right, Sharon also coached youth soccer, worked as a referee, and has experience as a liturgical dancer.

Steve and Sharon's commitment to their children is clear. Shelley graduated from Christopher Newport University and Stacey took her first degree from Virginia Tech, subsequently earning a nursing degree from Marymount University in Arlington, VA.

There is an expression that "slow and steady wins the race." For more than three decades the House of Representatives has benefited from the tireless service of these very capable civil servants. You won't see their names on the election ballot every 2 years, but the work of this body would be impossible without individuals such as Steve and Sharon Rusnak. Their dedication to their jobs, their country and their family are an inspiration to us all and I would like to thank and commend them for their selfless service to this body. And I hasten to wish them a long, happy, and healthy retirement. They have certainly earned it.

VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL AND GAZA

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2009

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that is very much on the minds of my constituents right now—the violence in Israel and Gaza.

This is a difficult time for Israel, and as its ally, I believe we must support its right to self-defense.

Before I joined Congress, I had the privilege of visiting Israel. It was a trip that I will never forget. I have always considered myself a friend of Israel, but that trip made me realize just how much our two nations have in common.

We all want peace, Madam Speaker, but clearly there can be no peace while Hamas continues to launch unprovoked rocket attacks into Israel.

We would not let Hamas launch rockets into the United States, and I do not know how we could expect Israel to permit these attacks either.

I am deeply saddened by the casualties the recent conflict has inflicted, especially the civilian casualties. Each one of these is a tragedy, and I sincerely hope that both sides will do everything possible to avoid them.

I am encouraged by Israel's decision to temporarily pause its military operations to allow delivery of humanitarian aid, and by Hamas's decision to cease rocket launches during these deliveries. While only three hours, this is an important step forward. I hope that a longer lasting peace can be achieved soon.

CONGRATULATING RIVERHEAD BLUE WAVES FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the exceptional achievements of the Riverhead Blue Waves Football Team: 2008 Long Island Class II Champions and the first Long Island squad in history to compile a record of 12–0. The Blue Waves also earned the overall championship for Suffolk County and the Rutgers Award as the county's consensus best team.

As always, Riverhead's success was built on strong teamwork, solid coaching, and the contributions of talented individuals. Anchoring a potent offense that averaged 35 points per game, senior running back Miguel Maysonet was voted the top offensive player in Suffolk County by opposing coaches. The same group recognized one of their own, Riverhead Coach Leif Shay, as coach of the year.

Madam Speaker, the success of Riverhead's football team has brought great pride to their school and the community. I am pleased to join all residents of Riverhead in congratulating the Blue Waves on their accomplishments, and wish the departing seniors the best of luck in their future endeavors.

IN MEMORY OF PAUL WEYRICH

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on December 18, Paul Weyrich, one of the founders of the modern conservative movement, died. He successfully worked to evolve conservatism from a status of negativism to a dynamic movement promoting creative and meaningful reforms. I personally saw his success firsthand with the American Legislative Exchange Council developing State legislative reforms. And with Dr. Robert Kriebel, I served on the delegation in August 1991 of the Kriebel Institute to Sofia, Bulgaria, where Paul Weyrich gave presentations to the newly elected democrats of the National Assembly who helped Bulgaria emerge from the darkness of totalitarian Communism. Bulgaria today is a model free market democracy as a valued member of NATO and the European Union. His service to our nation will always be appreciated.

John Gizzi, columnist for Human Events professionally penned the following thoughtful tribute to Mr. Weyrich on the day of his passing.

[From Human Events, Dec. 18, 2008]

PAUL WEYRICH: RIP

(By John Gizzi)

Paul Weyrich—"The midwife of the New Right"... "Pope Paul"... "The Man Who Taught Conservatives to Network"—passed away this morning after a long illness.

Weyrich was called a lot of things—and some of them that originated on the left are unprintable—but one thing admirers and enemies of Paul Weyrich found inarguable: that in 66 years of life, the man who